



Embassy & Permanent Mission of Afghanistan - Vienna

Press Release

Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Cooperation visited Vienna

Vienna, 11 November 2016

On an invitation by the OSCE, H.E. Adela Raz, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Cooperation paid a visit to Vienna this week to participate in a number of meetings. She delivered a key note at the OSCE Asian Contact Group Meeting with a special segment on Afghanistan entitled “*Security, Stability and Development in Afghanistan: Transforming Threats into Opportunities for the Younger Generation*” and addressed the Permanent Council of the OSCE.

Addressing the OSCE's Permanent Council, H.E. Ms. Raz spoke about the new Afghanistan National Programme and Development Framework (ANPDF) as presented at the Brussels Conference; discussed the National Priority Programs (NPPs) of Afghanistan in the areas of rural and urban development, agriculture development, infrastructure development and women's economic empowerment, with a special focus on job creation for youth and women; highlighted the importance of regional cooperation including under RECCA and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process and the future role of the OSCE in this context; and encouraged additional activities of the OSCE for Afghanistan, including under the 2nd dimension of the work of the OSCE (economy and environment). The Deputy Minister also presented the achievements of the Government of Afghanistan in the areas of women's empowerment, education, anti-corruption, infrastructure and agriculture, and highlighted the ever-increasing number of male and female participants from Afghanistan in training and capacity-building programmes and projects organized by the OSCE field presence in Central Asia. In conclusion, the Deputy Minister emphasized that the Afghan people have come a long way since the end of 2001, and that today the people and Government of Afghanistan have a clear vision, agenda and commitment to further improve the situation in Afghanistan by transforming challenges into opportunities.

In her remarks at the Asian Contact Group Meeting, the Deputy Foreign Minister spoke about the position of women, youth and regional cooperation in the vision for peace, stability and development in Afghanistan, explained some of the achievements made in the area of women's empowerment including their increased access to political participation and economic opportunities and highlighted some of the challenges that youth in Afghanistan are facing including unemployment and shortage of education opportunities. Deputy Foreign Minister Raz stressed the importance of continued assistance by the OSCE and other international partners, in supporting the women and youth-related programs as well as Afghanistan-focused regional economic cooperation projects.

During the visit to Vienna, Deputy Foreign Minister Raz had bilateral meetings related to the work of the OSCE with the Secretary General of the OSCE, H.E. Ambassador Lamberto Zannier; with the Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, H.E. Ambassador Eberhard Pohl (Germany); with the Chairperson of the Asian Contact Group, H.E. Ambassador Vuk Žugić (Serbia), who hosted a work breakfast for the Deputy Minister's delegation; and with the OSCE's Senior Advisor on Gender Issues, H.E. Ambassador Miroslava Beham.

The Deputy Foreign Minister also discussed matters of mutual interest with H.E. Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger and H.E. Vice-Minister Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal as well as high-level officials from the Austrian Federal Ministries of Defense and Interior. This meeting was followed by fruitful deliberations with the Chairperson of the Subcommittee for Development Cooperation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Austrian National Council, Hon. Petra Bayr MP.

H.E. Adela Raz was also briefed by UNIDO officials about the current status of UNIDO projects for Afghanistan, while discussing ways and means of enhanced future cooperation between Afghanistan and UNIDO.

The Deputy Foreign Minister was accompanied to these meetings by Mr. Hassan Soroosh, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Afghanistan in Vienna, Mr. Naseer Ahmad Faiq, Deputy Director General of the Regional Cooperation Department of the Foreign Ministry, Ms. Fatima Frozish, Second Secretary with the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Afghanistan in Vienna, and Mr. Mohammad Ibrahim Sahibzada, Office of the Chief of Staff of the Foreign Ministry.

The Embassy and Permanent Mission of Afghanistan hosted a reception in honor of the visit of H.E. Adela Raz, attended by Ambassadors and other high-ranking officials from the OSCE Secretariat, Delegations to the OSCE and the Austrian Foreign Office.

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